Whether or not feedback is effective depends on what students need to hear, not what you need to say. Consultant Susan Brookhart

* **Staff will take the technology survey May 1st through the 13th. Instructions for the “Next Generation for Teachers” survey will come out soon. The survey must be completed by May 13th (Transition In Service day) see the note below from Glenn Bugni.**
* **VOIP phone system will be operational May 10th—cut-over date.**
* **My wiki space is constantly being updated and new items are always added—including the latest “Faculty Memo” issue. Check it out at :** <http://aviewfromtheknol.wikispaces.com/>
* From Glenn Bugni: As you may remember, we are assessing the technology competency levels of our teachers using Next Generation Assessments from May 1 through our in service day on May 13.   This data will be used as a basis for planning technology staff development activities for 2011-12 and also included in our District Three-Year 2012-2015 Technology Plan that is due to the DPI during the 2011-12 academic year.

The code that your teachers use is based upon school location.  When the teachers sign into the NGA assessment website, they must use the codes shown below for their respective school:

Teachers will go to[**http://www.Survey2000.com**](http://www.Survey2000.com)**.** Each school has a different code:

Antigo Middle **M5RQ-W2WK-QZL2-KHG8**

I hope that you will be able to track the number of teachers who have taken the NGA technology assessment from your school as teachers surveys are not identified by their assessment.   Our goal is a 95 percent completion rate from each school.

The only feedback that I can give you is the number of teachers who have taken the NGA assessment from your school.  I can tell you that rate at any time.

If a teacher is taking the assessment and there is an equipment failure or power outage, the assessment will need to be retaken from the beginning as the assessment does not tally until the submit button is selected.

I will send out an announcement to all staff except the middle school (middle school teachers have already taken the assessment), asking them to complete the NGA teacher assessment by end of the day on May 13.

Current Research and Information—

# 2. Feedback That Helps

**“Whether or not feedback is effective depends on what students need to hear, not what you need to say,” says consultant Susan Brookhart in this article in *The Virginia Journal of Education* (spotted in *Education Digest*). Here are her desiderata about feedback:**

**• *Timely* – The quicker the better, says Brookhart, so students get feedback while they still remember the assignment and why they were doing it.**

**• *Identifying one or more strengths and at least one next step* – Sometimes students aren’t aware of their strengths and need them reinforced, and they often need next steps pointed out. A teacher might say to a struggling student, “I see you skipped this line. It might help to keep your place with your finger.”**

**• *Focused on students’ work and work processes, not on them personally* – It’s not helpful to talk about how smart or lazy a student is. Talk about the work.**

**• *Descriptive, not judgmental* – The best feedback compares work to specific criteria or exemplars. With struggling students, the standard or exemplar might be so far from their current work that it’s intimidating, in which case it’s helpful to compare current work to earlier, less-developed work.**

**• *Positive, clear, and specific* – “‘Clear’ means clear to the student,” says Brookhart. “The tone of feedback, whether written or oral, should convey your confidence in the student as a learner. It should not sound like giving orders.” Struggling students need to focus on one or two small steps they need to take to improve, and simple, clear vocabulary is important. With more successful students, specific praise is better than “Great job” – for example, “This is a great paper. I especially appreciated the way you made a chart to summarize your information and then discussed it point by point. That made it really clear.”**

**• *Check for understanding* – “Do you understand?” is not enough. Better to ask, “What is the most important thing you see here?” or “What is the very next thing you’re going to do on this paper?”**

**“Tailoring Feedback” by Susan Brookhart in *The Virginia Journal of Education*, February 2010 (spotted in *Education Digest*, May 2011, Vol. 76, #9, p. 33-36); see an earlier Brookhart article on feedback in Marshall Memo 215**

# 8. Checking for Student Understanding

**“In video games, failure is good,” says Western New Mexico University professor Debra Dirksen in this *Kappan* article. “Players start over so they can learn and gain the skills necessary to move on to higher levels. The gaming industry has learned what we as educators need to learn: the ability to press reset is motivating, and players use this tool to succeed at the game. How can we build into instruction the idea that failure is an integral part of learning? How can we build hope through failure instead of teaching students to fear failure?”**

**The answer, says Dirksen, is the skillful use of on-the-spot and interim assessments in classrooms. She believes that when teachers check on student understanding and immediately follow up, there are major gains in learning. Among the most effective methods are “clickers”, pair-and-share collaborative learning, quick-writes, weekly summaries, graphic organizers, and journaling. One activity that Dirksen has found particularly helpful is “Circle, Square, Triangle”: after being presented with new content, students are asked to jot down three things:**

**-   Circle – What’s still going around in your head? What do you still not understand?**

**-   Square – What’s squared away? What do you really understand?**

**-   Triangle – What three things could you use in your life, work, or studies?**

**Students’ responses to these questions can give teachers invaluable information on next steps.**

**“Hitting the Reset Button: Using Formative Assessment to Guide Instruction” by Debra Dirksen in *Phi Delta Kappan*, April 2011 (Vol. 92, #7, p. 26-31)** [**http://www.kappanmagazine.org**](http://www.kappanmagazine.org/)

***FROM THE “DON’T FORGET” FILES:***

* **WKCE test results are in and I have saved them to the Staff Shared folder: “WKCE 2011”. There are several different reports, if you don’t see one you need, call me. They are also available on my wiki page:** <http://aviewfromtheknol.wikispaces.com/>
* **School will be dismissed at 1:00 PM on June 2nd—the last day for students.**

***Important dates from the fig tree:***

* Tech Survey for teachers May 1 through 13th; must be completed by the in service date or in service time will be used to complete the survey.
* MAP testing April 25- May 9th
* Graduation will be May 31st starting at 6:30 until 9:00
* **Incentive day is June 1st—make sure students know about the criteria, deadlines and options!**

**Technology you can Use:**

# Websites:

***a. Free technology for teachers***– See <http://www.freetech4teachers.com/> for a variety of Internet resources. ip

***b. Foreign-language websites*** – *The Language Educator’s* Web Watch section features these (among other) websites:

• [http://www.globe.gov](http://www.globe.gov/) – Science and environmental education in many languages;

• [http://lefttoright.yolasite.com](http://lefttoright.yolasite.com/) – Games and activities for language learning, featuring modifications of Mastermind, Scrabble, and Scattergories, and crossword puzzles in the target language.

***c. Figment*** – [http://figment.com](http://figment.com/) is like Facebook for aspiring writers – students can share their work with readers around the world. After creating a free Figment profile, students can post original short stories, poems, and novels for their classmates and others to read and review. Figment also has excerpts from new books, interviews with authors, writing contests, and discussions. Before each piece of writing is an estimate of how many minutes it will take to read.

***d. Tikatok*** – This website – <http://www.tikatok.com/classroom> - lets children write, illustrate, and publish their own stories. It also has hints on the writing process as students develop their stories. When a story or book is complete, teachers can order professional-quality hard-cover, paperback, or digital copies. Teacher registration is free.

***e. Showbeyond*** – This website is also geared to developing students’ writing, but focuses more on multimedia slideshow narratives: <http://www.showbeyond.com/show/home>

***f. National library of virtual manipulatives*** – Utah State University developed this website to showcase effective visual representations of K-12 math manipulatives in geometry, algebra, measurement, data analysis, probability, and numbers and operations. It’s at

[http://nlvm.usu.edu](http://nlvm.usu.edu/).

***g. GeoGebra*** – This free website helps make the connection between algebra and geometry: <http://www.geogebra.org/cms>

“The above sites are from: “Websites to Know” in *Teacher PD Sourcebook*, Spring 2011